

PEOPLE & THINGS By ATTICUS

LONDONERS have almost forgotten the long winter of their discontent in the radiant sun of the last few days. When the Prime Minister's son, Mr. Maurice Macmillan, and a fellow Tory M.P. received the deputation from Nigeria on the steps of the Palace of Westminster it was like history in glorious Technicolor.

How elegant and feminine the Nigerian women looked in their multi-coloured shawls! Not for them the absurd meat-pie hats which fashion has forced on our women during the last few months. Some of the Nigerian men wore gorgeous robes, but others contented themselves with smart black suits and gleaming white collars and shirts.

The Postmaster-General, Mr. Ernest Marples, the official host, was so impressed by the deputation that he now intends to study the Nigerian problem at first hand. In short, he is going to visit Nigeria—and who can blame him?

Incidentally Mr. Speaker Morrison gave a dinner party a few days ago in his official residence for the Burmese Parliamentary Delegation, when Admiral Earl Mountbatten renewed old acquaintance. The view of the Terrace from Mr. Speaker's windows is an attractive one. The sight of politicians walking in deep discourse with each other must have impressed our guests.

National Saver

NEXT Saturday that many-sided Yorkshireman, Lord Mackintosh of Halifax, will be 66 years of age. Next Saturday his wife will also be 66 years of age. As a descendant of Scotland, and also a man whose name will ever be connected with savings, Lord Mackintosh is thus able to celebrate two birthdays in one.

One of the greatest publicists of our time, Lord Mackintosh's career has shown an unusual combination of flair and hard work. Nothing but his sincerely-held belief in the virtues of thrift could have made him so conscientious and determined a chairman of the National Savings Committee during the thirteen years he has held the post.

But the adroit publicity of his Premium Bond campaign is only the latest of a series of successful advertising coups which began when, as a very young man, he engaged Heath Robinson for a famous set of advertisements showing the improbable processes behind the scenes in his family toffee-making business. During the war it was Lord Mackintosh who was responsible for such inspired money-raisers as the "Salute the Soldier" and the "Wings for Victory" savings campaigns.

Somewhat he has also found the time to become a notable breeder of Jersey cattle, an important collector of 18th-century paintings, and an expert on Staffordshire pottery. His "Early English Figure Pottery" is nowadays something of a classic.

Injustice to Elgar

NOW let us rebuke the musical world for practically ignoring the fact that Sir Edward Elgar was born a hundred years ago today. For the last 40 years of his life he held the unofficial position of composer-in-auxiliary to the nation. When

there was a coronation Elgar's trumpet music shook the very rafters. If there was a Royal funeral service his Enigma Variations made comment upon the scene. When Britain went to war in 1914 he produced such stirring compositions as the "Spirit of England" and "Canlions."

One of his Pomp and Circumstance overtures became almost a second National Anthem, with its superimposed words of "Land of Hope and Glory." Elgar never intended that it



Sir Edward Elgar

should be anything but an orchestral composition, and certainly if he had known that it would become the established chorus of the patriots he would not have ended on such high notes that only a skilled or optimistic singer could attempt them.

Elgar picked up his musical education in his father's shop and he lived to be honoured and acclaimed by the whole musical world. Yet his centenary is allowed to pass almost as if it were no more than a date on the calendar.

Picasso, Please Note!

IN these days, when so much that is rustic and wild succumbs to our urban and mechanical civilisation, it is refreshing to read of new wild life in our crowded islands. So I was fascinated by the account of the appearance of the Collared Dove in Norfolk printed in the latest issue of the magazine "British Birds."

In 1952 a single Collared Dove was seen in Lincolnshire, and every year since then it has reappeared, but there is good reason for believing that this lone bird is a dealer's specimen that had escaped. The Norfolk doves, however, must be wild immigrants from the Continent—up to twelve of them wintered here in 1956-57—and for the first time the Collared Dove can now safely be dubbed a British bird.

This is the fiftieth anniversary number of "British Birds," and as one who can hardly "tell a hawk from a handsaw"—the heron, by the way, is still called a harnser in East Anglia—I wish it godspeed towards its centenary.

By any other Name?

MY political friend Mr. I. J. Pitman tells me that there was a very moving ceremony on Empire Day, although he thinks that May 24 should be re-christened Commonwealth Day. Some 20 fellow-students spoke for one minute about their home town, their country and what the Commonwealth meant to them.

Running through all their speeches was a genuine affec-

tion for the Commonwealth, but also considerable astonishment that our schools were open on that day. A Scottish girl spoke for Britain and insisted that she meant Britain. She claimed that her country joined the Commonwealth 300 years ago, and that as a result there was an end of wars between her country and England. Thus, she declared, the Scots were able to make their fortunes in England and take a disproportionate number of positions of leadership in the Commonwealth.

Personally, I like the word "Empire," but if it would make the Scots happier—I am quite prepared to see it buried in our glorious past. On the other hand, it would be a pity if England ceased to be invaded. We have been invaded throughout the centuries and have absorbed the conquerors in the process.

However, the question before the House is whether Empire Day should be renamed Commonwealth Day. It would be interesting if readers of THE SUNDAY TIMES would give Atticus their views.

Private Enterprise

IN a recent television programme there was an interesting discussion concerning the manner in which Lintel Stones were raised at Stonehenge. Inevitably it recalled to my mind the extraordinary manner in which it changed hands.

Mr. Cecil Chubb, as he was then, had a home on Salisbury Plain and one day noticed an unusual activity around the famous Stonehenge. For some reason it was being auctioned, and Mr. Chubb entered the contest. In fact he not only entered, but won. Then he went home and told his wife—which you will agree was an act of considerable gallantry. How many men would dare to say to their wives, "By the way, my dear, I bought Stonehenge today?"

But that is not the end of the story. As a splendid gesture he ultimately gave Stonehenge to the nation, an act of inspired generosity which no doubt played some part in his acceptance of a baronetcy a year later.

Among Sir Cecil's other interests was a mental home for gentlemen whose wits had become bemused. One of the patients who believed himself to be John D. Rockefeller thought nothing of giving him a cheque for a million dollars on a fine day. I am certain that Sir Cecil's good humour and gentleness did much to alleviate the sickness of the disordered minds.

Strange Logic?

BEFORE we leave the subject of eccentricity I think we should ponder the strange appointment of the Headmaster of Rugby, Sir Arthur Hodge, as Governor and Chairman of the B.B.C., the appointment being for five years.

As a race we have always preferred the gifted amateur to the experienced professional, but this appointment seems an extreme example of that philosophy. Sir Arthur has never owned a television set, which means that he will bring an agreeable virginity to his task; but would THE SUNDAY TIMES have appointed Mr. Harold Hobson as its dramatic

critic if he had never been to the theatre?

Change on the 'Change?

SIR JOHN BRAITHWAITE, chairman of the London Stock Exchange, is considering whether that famous institution should advertise. Such a move would be a break with tradition, but certainly there is a great deal of money lying uninvested in shares because people do not know how it is done. The noble army of punters who put their trust in horses would get a much better run for their money with the blue chips of Throgmorton Street.

But in the matter of publicity I suggest that the Stock Exchange could begin at home. I paid my first visit there recently, and was taken to a gallery which was hermetically sealed in glass so that no sounds whatsoever could reach the visitor. In fact, looking from the gallery at the figures on the floor was like watching a film in which the sound track was not functioning. Nevertheless, it was an impressive spectacle.

From a political standpoint there is much to be said for expanding the area of investment. The man who holds an equity of even £50 in a commercial undertaking has a sense of proprietorship which broadens his whole conception of the capitalist system, and unlike betting on horses the wager is not lost even if the stocks and shares fall back.

A Lost Dream

THE footlights are going out one by one. Now it is the Stoll Theatre which is to give way to the march of progress. It was brave of the original Oscar Hammerstein to imagine that London could sustain two great opera houses, although it cannot be denied the one he built in Kingsway somewhat lacked personality.

It had another defect which, as a foreigner, he could not have foreseen. I refer to the accessibility and generous parking space of Kingsway. The true Londoner feels that he has been cheated unless he has to struggle through a dense crowd to enter a theatre.

My last memory of the Stoll Theatre is an exciting although by no means flawless rendition of "La Bohème" by an Italian company a couple of weeks ago. The orchestra was small in numbers and the scenic effects were in the nature of a compromise between art and economy, but how gloriously the tenor and soprano soared to their top notes and stayed there as though unwilling to come down to the mundane levels of mere mortals.

Salute, Mr. Hammerstein's memory. It is better to have dreamed and lost than never to have dreamed at all.

People and Words

"Nowadays a Sixth Form is nothing more than a guided missile aimed at the gates of a university."

—MR. B. M. DYER, President of the Youth Employment Officers' Association.

"The average Londoner would rather take a whisky and soda than take dope."

—SIR RONALD HOWE.

"It's really extraordinarily difficult to get a skeleton through the Customs!"

—SIR MORTIMER WHEELER.

"The most precious thing for a politician to keep is his word."

—M. DEWE TRISTRAM